



AUGUST 2012 • VOL. 32 • NO. 8

about

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES,
CALLED
GENESIS.

CHAP. I
Heaven
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Another Pointless Attempt to Defeat Biogenesis

A.P. Poster

Clearing-Up “Contradictions” about Jehovah in GENESIS

Eric Lyons, M.Min.

THE infinite attributes and actions of God are no small matter to consider. In truth, man could **never** meditate on anything greater. We marvel, as did the apostle Paul, at “the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33). We are awestruck by His eternality. We tremble at the thought of His omnipotence. We humbly bow before Him Who knows our every thought. As David recognized, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me” (Psalm 139:6). Experientially speaking, as finite beings, we will never be able to fully grasp the wonders of God. As Jehovah Himself said, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways.... For as the heavens are higher than the Earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9). Yet, how thankful we are that God chose to reveal certain things to us about Himself (cf. Deuteronomy 29:29; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16), which, as much as is humanly possible, we can come to know. He is love (1 John 4:8). He is logical (1 Corinthians 14:33). He is just (Acts 10:34-35). He is worthy of all praise, honor, and obedience (Psalm 18:3; Matthew 10:34-39). He is everything that His inspired Word reveals that He is.

Oftentimes, however, passages of Scripture are cited by Bible critics as “proof” of the Book’s errancy and of the contradictory portrait that the inspired writers allegedly painted of God. In his 2009 debate with Kyle Butt on the existence of God, atheist Dan Barker spent nearly two-thirds of his opening 15-minute speech listing 14 alleged “inconsistencies” among Bible verses that allude to various characteristics and actions of God. Four of those 14 “contradictions” were from the book of Genesis (Butt and Barker, 2009). Dennis McKinsey, in his book titled *Biblical Errancy*, spent 44 pages listing numerous charges against God and the Bible’s statements about Him. Sixteen of those 44 pages referred a total of 37 times to alleged problematic passages in the book of Genesis (McKinsey, 2000, pp. 133-177). On his Web site attempting to expose the Bible and the God of the Bible as frauds, R. Paul Buchman listed 83 “contradictions” involving “God’s Nature” and 142 about “God’s Laws” (2011). Fifty-one times he referred to Genesis.

Legion are those who claim that the Bible paints an inexplicable, paradoxical portrait of God. When the Scriptures are honestly and carefully examined, however, all such criticisms of the Creator and His Word are shown to be either mere misunderstandings or artificially contrived contradictions. Consider some of the most frequently

cited allegations against Jehovah in Genesis.

DOES JEHOVAH REALLY KNOW EVERYTHING?

NUMEROUS passages of Scripture clearly teach that God is omniscient. The Bible declares that the Lord “knows the secrets of the heart” (Psalm 44:21), that His eyes “are in every place” (Proverbs 15:3), and that “His understanding is infinite” (Psalm 147:5). Of Jehovah, the psalmist also wrote:

O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.... Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there (139:1-4,6-8).

The New Testament reemphasizes this truth, saying, “God is greater than our heart, and **knows all things**” (1 John 3:20, emp. added). “[T]here is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13). Not only does He know the past and the present, but the future as well (Acts 15:18; cf. Isaiah 46:10). There is nothing outside of the awareness of God.

If God knows (and sees) everything, some have questioned why certain statements exist in Scripture that seem to indicate otherwise. Why was it that God questioned Cain regarding the whereabouts of his brother Abel if He already knew where he was (Genesis 4:6)? Why did the Lord and two of His angels ask Abraham about the location of his wife if He is omniscient (Genesis 18:9)? And, if God knows all and sees all, why did He say to Abraham concerning Sodom and Gomorrah: “I

will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and **if not, I will know**" (Genesis 18:21, emp. added; cf. Genesis 22:12)? If God is omniscient, why would He need to "go" somewhere to "see whether" people were wicked or not? Does God really know everything?

First, when critics claim that the questions God asked Cain or Sarah (or Satan—cf. Job 1:7; 2:2) suggest that God's knowledge is limited, they are assuming that all questions are asked solely for the purpose of obtaining information. Common sense should tell us, however, that questions often are asked for other reasons. Are we to assume that God was ignorant of Adam's whereabouts when He asked him, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). At the beginning of God's first speech to Job, God asked the patriarch, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the Earth?" (38:4). Are we to believe that God did not know where Job was when He created the world? Certainly not! What father, having seen his son dent a car door, has not asked him, "Who did that?" Obviously, the father did not ask the question to obtain information, but rather to see if the son would admit to something the father knew all along. When a dog owner, who comes home from work and sees the arm of his couch chewed to pieces, points to the couch and asks his puppy, "Did you do that?" are we to think that the owner really is asking the question for his own benefit?

On occasion, Jesus used questions for the same purpose. When He questioned the Pharisees' disciples and the Herodians regarding whose inscription was on a particular coin, it clearly was not because He did not know (Matthew 22:15-22). Likewise, when Jesus asked the multitude that thronged Him, "Who touched Me?" (Luke 8:45), it was not because the woman who touched Him was hidden from Him (Luke 8:47). Jesus knew the woman was made well

by touching His garment before she ever confessed to touching Him (Mark 5:32). Thus, His question was intended to bring attention to her great faith and His great power (Mark 5:34). Truly, in no way are the questions God asks mankind an indication of His being less than divine.

What about Jehovah's statement to Abraham recorded in Genesis 18:21? Did He not know the state of Sodom and Gomorrah prior to His messengers' visit (Genesis 18:22; 19:1-29)? Did He have to "learn" whether the inhabitants of these two cities were as evil as some had said? Certainly not. Moses and the other Bible writer's usage of phrases such as "I will know" (Genesis 18:21) or "now I know" (Genesis 22:12) in reference to God, actually are for the benefit of man. Throughout the Bible, human actions (such as learning) frequently are attributed to God for the purpose of helping finite beings better understand Him. This kind of accommodative language is called anthropomorphic (meaning "man form"). When Jehovah "came down to see the city and the tower" built at Babel (Genesis 11:5), it was not for the purpose of gaining knowledge. Anthropomorphic expressions such as these are not meant to suggest that God

is not fully aware of everything. Rather, as in the case of Babel, such wording was used to show that He was "officially and judicially taking the situation under direct observation and consideration, it having become so flagrant that there was danger (as in the days of Noah) that the truth of God's revelation might be completely obliterated if it were allowed to continue" (Morris, 1976, p. 272). Almighty God visited Sodom and Gomorrah likely "for appearance' sake, that men might know directly that God had actually seen the full situation before He acted in judgment" (Morris, p. 342). As Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown noted in their commentary on Genesis: "These cities were to be made ensamples to all future ages of God's severity, and therefore ample proof given that the judgment was neither rash nor excessive (Ezek 18:23; Jer 18:7)" (1997).

Similar to how God instructs man to pray and make "known" to Him our petitions for our benefit (Philippians 4:6), even though He actually already knows our prayers and needs before they are voiced (Matthew 6:8), **for our profit** the all-knowing God sometimes is spoken of in accommodative language as acquiring knowledge.

Reason & Revelation is published monthly by Apologetics Press, Inc. Periodicals postage paid at Montgomery, AL. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to **Reason & Revelation**, 230 Landmark Dr., Montgomery, AL 36117; **ISSN:** [1542-0922] **USPS#** 023415.

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WAS GOD'S NAME "JEHOVAH" MADE KNOWN TO THE PATRIARCHS?

SKEPTICS not only criticize the Bible's teaching about God's knowledge; they are also critical of what Scripture says man has known (via revelation from God) in the past. You would find it odd if someone you had known very well for years said, "you did not know him." You might think this friend had become a liar or a lunatic if he indicated that you were not aware of his name, even though you had known his first and last name for many years. Skeptics claim we should be equally bothered by what the Bible says, because it indicates that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not know God by His name, Jehovah, even though the book of Genesis indicates that they did.

After Moses first visited Pharaoh regarding the release of the Israelites from bondage, God assured Moses that the Israelites would be liberated. He then added: "I am Jehovah: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty; **but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them**" (Exodus 6:2-3, emp. added; NOTE: All Scripture citations in this section are taken from the American Standard Version). The difficulty that Bible students have with this statement is that the name "Jehovah" (Hebrew *Yahweh*; translated LORD in most modern versions) appears approximately 160 times in the book of Genesis. Furthermore, "Jehovah" is used between Genesis chapters 12-50 (which deal mainly with the families of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) more than 100 times.

After God provided a ram for Abraham to sacrifice (instead of his son, Isaac) on Mount Moriah, Genesis 22:14 says, "Abraham called the name of that place **Jehovah-jireh**. As it is said to this day, in the mount of **Jehovah** it shall be provided" (emp. added). Years later, Isaac asked his son Jacob (who was deceiving his father in hopes of receiving a blessing), "How is it that thou hast

found it so quickly, my son? And he said, because **Jehovah** thy God sent me good speed" (Genesis 27:20, emp. added). How could God tell Moses that "by my name Jehovah I was not known to them" (Exodus 6:3), if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were well aware of the name Jehovah, and even used it in their conversations? Is God a liar? Does the Bible contradict itself on this point? What reasonable answer can be given?

There is no denying the fact that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were aware of God's name, Jehovah (*Yahweh*) [cf. Genesis 15:7; 22:14,24-35,40,42,48,56; 24:50,51; 26:22; 27:20; 49:18; etc.]. As John J. Davis wrote: "[I]n the book of Genesis...the name of Yahweh is introduced in a way which utterly precludes the supposition that it is used proleptically, or that it is anything but a correct account of the incident and the actual term employed" (Davis, 1963, 4[1]:34). Based upon the number of times the word (*Yahweh*) appears in Genesis, and the various ways in which it was used, including being a part of compound names that have specific meanings (e.g., Jehovah-jireh, meaning "Jehovah will provide"), it is unwise to argue that the patriarchs in Genesis were unaware of the name Jehovah. So what is the answer to this alleged problem?

Although Bible critics and unbelievers may scoff at any attempt to explain Moses' statement, which they believe is irresolvable, the fact is, a logical explanation exists. The expressions "to know the name of Jehovah" or simply "to know Jehovah" frequently **mean more than a mere awareness of His name and existence**. Rather, "to know" (from the Hebrew word *yada*) often means **to learn by experience**. When Samuel was a boy, the Bible reveals that he "ministered before/unto Jehovah" (1 Samuel 2:18; 3:1), and "increased in favor both with Jehovah, and also with men" (2:26). Later, however, we learn that "**Samuel did not yet know Jehovah**, neither was the word of Jehovah yet revealed unto him" (1 Samuel 3:7, emp. added).

In one sense, Samuel "knew" Jehovah early on, but beginning in 1 Samuel 3:7 his relationship with God changed. From this point forward he began receiving direct revelations from God (cf. 1 Samuel 3:11-14; 8:7-10,22; 9:15-17; 16:1-3; etc.). Comparing this new relationship with God to his previous relationship and knowledge of Him, the author of 1 Samuel could reasonably say that beforehand "Samuel did not yet know Jehovah" (3:7).

According to Gleason Archer, the phrase "to know that I am Jehovah" (or "to know the name of Jehovah") appears in the Old Testament at least 26 times, and "in every instance it signifies to learn by actual experience that God is Yahweh" (1982, pp. 66-67). In the book of Exodus alone, the expression "to know" (*yada*) appears five times in relation to Jehovah, and "[i]n every case it suggests an experiential knowledge of both the person and power of Yahweh. In every case the knowledge of Yahweh is connected with some deed or act of Yahweh which in some way reveals both His person and power" (Davis, 4[1]:39). For example, in one of the passages that has drawn so much criticism, God stated: "I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and **ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God**, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" (Exodus 6:7, emp. added). Later, after God already had sent ten plagues upon the Egyptians (Exodus 7:14-12:30), parted the Red Sea (Exodus 14), and miraculously made bitter water sweet (Exodus 15:22-25), He said to Moses, "I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread: and **ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God**" (Exodus 16:11-12, emp. added). After several more weeks, God said to Moses on Mount Sinai: "And **they shall know that I am Jehovah their God**, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt,"

(cont. on p. 81)

Another Pointless Attempt to Defeat Biogenesis

Jeff Miller, Ph.D.

“British scientists recreate the molecules that gave birth to life itself”—the title of a recent article posted by the UK based, *Mail Online* (Enoch, 2012). Such a bold, presumptuous title certainly grabs your attention, considering that it leaves the impression that abiogenesis has finally been proved—that non-living “molecules” can give rise to life, contrary to the mounds of scientific evidence that prove that life comes only from life (see Miller, 2012). Unfortunately for the atheistic evolutionist, the article admits more bad news for the beloved theory than good.

The article begins with the statement, “Scientists [i.e., evolutionary scientists—JM] are one step closer to understanding the origin of life...” (Enoch). To the atheist, this would sound exciting, until he realizes that the author is tacitly admitting that after decades of work trying to establish that life could somehow evolve from non-life—which **must** have occurred in order for Darwinian evolution even to begin—scientists still do not understand the origin of life. Robert Hazen, a research scientist at the Carnegie Institution of Washington’s Geophysical Laboratory, admitted in his lecture series, *Origins of Life*, that scientists “don’t know how life began,” but rather, have to “make an assumption that life emerged from basic raw materials through a sequence of events that was completely consistent with the natural laws of chemistry and physics” (Hazen, 2005). Paul Davies, theoretical physicist, cosmologist, astrobiologist, and professor at Arizona State University said, “One of the great outstanding scientific mysteries is the origin of life. How did it happen?... The truth is, nobody has a clue” (2006, 192[2578]:35). Eminent British evolutionary biologist, Richard Dawkins, also admitted that no one knows how life began (Stein and Miller, 2008).

The problem with this idea, from a scientific standpoint, is that science **has**, in fact, spoken about the origin of life. Science has proven time and again that, in nature, life comes only from life (Miller, 2012). Life does not come from non-living things in nature. So, according to science, the answer to the origin of life question must be found **outside** of nature—from a **supernatural** source. Don’t expect the atheistic evolutionist to accept that logical implication

from the scientific evidence, and don’t expect Enoch’s article to make that admission either.

What are the facts that can be gained from the research discussed in the article? The tests conducted by organic chemists at the University of York and the University of Nottingham reveal that “using simple left-handed amino acids to catalyse the formation of sugars resulted in the production of the predominantly right-handed form of sugars” (Enoch). This is amazing and significant research. The problem, as usual, is not the evidence of science, but the interpretation of the evidence by evolutionists. The researchers assert that their find might explain how carbohydrates could have originally evolved on Earth and why the right-handed form dominates in nature. According to Paul Clark, who led the team of scientists who conducted this research, “One of the interesting questions is where carbohydrates come from because they are the building blocks of DNA and RNA. What we have achieved is the **first step** on that pathway to show how simple sugars—threose and erythrose—originated” (Enoch, *emp. added*).

Notice that they “jump from A to Z” in their conclusion that their findings have proven to be the “first step” in showing how “simple sugars...originated.” How can one make such an assertion? That’s like seeing a car for the first time, noticing that it is green, and proceeding to assume that the first step has been taken in proving that all vehicles are green cars. The researchers go beyond the evidence when they apply their excellent research to a **hypothetical** world that **allegedly might** have existed eons ago, that **might** have had just the right conditions **and** available materials to produce the results **they** gathered from their experiments—conditions and materials which have only been present in their laboratory, not in nature—which **may or may not** have been the means by which, in the evolutionist’s eyes, life could have somehow spontaneously arrived in the first place.

As is usually the case when such research is publicized, the authors want to grab your attention by boldly implying something that has not actually occurred. One has to read the article cautiously to catch the myriad disclaimers laced throughout the article, which subtly



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GENESIS 1:28

R&R Resources

highlight the fact that the implications of the research are characterized by mere assertions and conjecture—not proof. A quick perusal through the short, 357 word article, watching for disclaimers, reveals the following phrases concerning the interpretation of the research: “could have occurred”; “could explain”; “many people think”; “we are trying to understand”; “most scientists believe”; “hypothetical conditions”; “that may have been present on early Earth.” The truth: **naturalistic** scientists don’t have a clue how life originated. They can only guess and speculate because (1) they were not around when life was originally initiated, and (2) because **nature** reveals that life cannot come from non-life.

With that in mind, notice the significant admission by Paul Clarke. “For life to have evolved, you have to have a moment when non-living things become living—everything **up to that point** is chemistry. We are trying to understand the **chemical** origins of life” (Enoch, emp. added). So, Clark admits that his team’s research does not even involve trying to answer the ultimate question of how life could come from non-life. His team was merely interested in trying to figure out how the non-living building blocks of life could come about—not how they could make the jump to life. That question is still untouched by Clark’s team, and the scientific world at large.

In essence, these scientists are merely trying to figure out how the blocks of life could have come about from pre-existing materials that they **hope** were in existence eons ago—not how those building blocks could have accidentally arranged themselves into a building that came to life and started walking around giving birth to other fully functional buildings. In truth, the question of “how life could come from non-life” has already been addressed by the work of Redi, Spallanzani, and Pasteur, and their scientific research indicates that abiogenesis cannot happen (see Miller, 2012). So why are Clark and his team wasting their time trying to prove how the building blocks leading up to a disproven theory could form? According to the article,

The research has echoes of the landmark Miller-Urey study in 1952, which simulated hypothetical conditions that may have been present on early Earth. It showed how the building blocks of life can form from simple

chemical reactions—for example, electrical activity like that associated with lightning can prompt the formation of amino acids.

The problem with this statement is that the authors appear to have not gotten the memo that the Miller-Urey experiments are now considered to be almost totally irrelevant to the abiogenesis question today (see Miller, 2012 for a discussion of these experiments and how they are viewed today). The fact that the authors point to those experiments indicates that either they are behind the times among the evolutionary community or are so desperate to validate the possibility of abiogenesis that they ignore recent research which refutes their hopes.

Sadly, in this day and age, many scientists are only interested in studying nature to determine how things happen **through various evolutionary theories**, rather than simply finding how things happen. Their initial assumptions corrupt their interpretations of the evidence. Why would scientists not simply follow the evidence—wherever it might lead? Could it be that “they have itching ears” that prohibit them from enduring “sound doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:3)? Could it be that they refuse to “receive the love of the truth,” but instead, choose to “believe the lie” because they take “pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)? Regardless, the evidence is clear. In nature, life comes only from life. So, according to the scientific evidence, the only way life could have been initiated in the beginning was through a supernatural act by a Being outside of the natural realm. That is where the scientific evidence leads the logical mind.

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that I might dwell among them: I am Jehovah their God" (Exodus 29:46, emp. added). Did the Israelites not know Who Jehovah was by this time? Without question, they did. "They had already learned of Him as deliverer; now they would know Him as their provider" (Davis, 4[1]:39).

Notice also what Isaiah prophesied centuries after the time of Moses.

Now therefore, what do I here, saith Jehovah, seeing that my people is taken away for nought? They that rule over them do howl, saith Jehovah, and my name continually all the day is blasphemed. Therefore **my people shall know my name:** therefore (they shall know) in that day that I am he that doth speak; behold, it is I (Isaiah 52:5-6, emp. added).

More than 100 years later, following Judah's entrance into Babylonian captivity, God foretold of their return to Judea and spoke to them through the prophet Jeremiah. He said: "Therefore, behold, I will cause them to know, this once will I cause them to know my hand and my might; and **they shall know that my name is Jehovah**" (Jeremiah 16:21, emp. added). Are we to gather from these statements that Israel and Judah were not aware of God's name (Jehovah) before this time in their history? Certainly not. Obviously, something else is meant by the expression "to know (or not know) the name of Jehovah." In truth, it is a Hebrew idiom that "generally signifies knowledge of some particular act or attribute of Yahweh as it is revealed in His dealing with men" (Davis, 4[1]:40; see also Bullinger, 1898, p. 554).

Even in modern times it is possible for someone to know a person's name or office without **really** "knowing" the person (or understanding his/her office). Imagine a group of foreigners who had never heard of Michael "Air" Jordan before meeting him at a particular convention a few years after his retirement from the NBA. They might come to know his name in one sense, but it

could also be said that by his name "Air Jordan" they really did not know him. Only after going to a gym and watching him dunk a basketball by jumping (or "flying" in the **air**) from the free throw line, and seeing him in his original "Air Jordan" shoes, would the group begin to understand the name "Air Jordan."

Admittedly, at first glance, the many references to "Jehovah" in the book of Genesis may seem to contradict Exodus 6:3. However, when one realizes that the Hebrew idiom "to know" (and specifically "to know" **a name**) frequently means more than a mere awareness of a person, then the difficulty disappears. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knew God as Creator and sovereign Ruler of the Universe. But it would not be until centuries later, when God fulfilled the promises made to these patriarchs by delivering the nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage, that the full import of the name Jehovah would become known.

DID GOD TEMPT ABRAHAM?

ONE of the most criticized passages throughout the centuries in the book of Genesis has been chapter 22. In recent years, relentless Bible critic Dan Barker has alleged that he "knows" the God of the Bible cannot exist because "there are mutually incompatible properties/characteristics of the God that's in this book [the Bible—EL] that rule out

the possibility of His existence." One of the scriptures that Barker frequently cites as proof of the Bible's alleged inconsistent portrait of God is verse one of Genesis 22 (Barker, 1992, p. 169; Barker, 2008, p. 230; Butt and Barker, 2009). According to the King James translation of this passage, Genesis 22:1 affirms that "God did tempt Abraham" (KJV) to sacrifice his son Isaac. However, since James 1:13 says: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, **neither tempteth he any man**" (KJV, emp. added), Barker has insisted that God is like a married bachelor or a square circle—He cannot logically exist, if He both tempts and does not tempt.

If Genesis 22:1 actually taught that God really tempted Abraham to commit evil and sin, then the God of the Bible might be a "square circle," i.e., a logical contradiction. But, the fact of the matter is, God did not tempt Abraham to commit evil. Barker and others have formulated this argument based upon the King James Version and only **one** meaning of the Hebrew word (*nissâ*) that is used in Genesis 22:1. Although the word **can** mean "to tempt," the first two meanings that Brown, Driver, and Briggs give for *nissâ* in their *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* is "to test, to try" (1993). Likewise, the *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (1997) defines the word simply "to

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test” (Jenni and Westermann, 1997, 2:741-742). The *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* agrees that *nissâ* is best translated, whether in secular or theological contexts, as “testing” (Botterweck, et al., 1998, 9:443-455). For this reason, virtually all major translations in recent times, including the NKJV, NASB, ESV, NIV, and RSV, translate Genesis 22:1 using the term “tested,” not tempted.

When David put on the armor of King Saul prior to battling Goliath, the shepherd realized: “I cannot walk with these, for I have not **tested** (*nissâ*) them” (1 Samuel 17:39, emp. added). Obviously, this testing had nothing to do with David “tempting” his armor; he simply had not tested or tried on Saul’s armor previously. God led Israel during 40 years of desert wanderings “to humble...and **test**” them (Deuteronomy 8:2, emp. added), not to tempt them to sin. Notice also the contrast in Exodus 20:20 between (1) God testing man and (2) trying to cause man to sin. After giving Israel the Ten Commandments, Moses said: “Do not fear; for God has come to **test** (*nissâ*) **you**, and that His fear may be before you, **so that you may not sin**” (Exodus 20:20, emp. added). If one were to use Barker’s reasoning that *nissâ* must mean “to tempt,” regardless of the context, then he would have to interpret Exodus 20:20 to mean that God tempted Israel to sin, so that they would not sin—which would be an absurd interpretation.

When a person interprets the Bible, or any other book, without recognizing that words have a variety of meanings and can be used in various senses, a rational interpretation is impossible. Many alleged Bible contradictions are easily explained simply by acknowledging that words are used in a variety of ways (as they are today). Is a word to be taken literally or figuratively? Must the term in one place mean the exact same thing when in another context, or may it have different meanings? If English-speaking Americans can intelligibly

converse about **running** to the store in the 21st century by **driving** a car, or if we can easily communicate about **parking** on **driveways**, and **driving** on **parkways**, why do some people have such a difficult time understanding the various ways in which words were used in Bible times? Could it be that some Bible critics like Barker are simply predisposed to interpret Scripture unfairly? The evidence reveals that is exactly what is happening.

Rather than contradicting James 1:13, Genesis 22:1 actually corresponds perfectly with what James wrote near the beginning of his epistle: “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various **trials**, knowing that the **testing of your faith produces patience**. But let patience have its perfect work, **that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing**” (1:2-4, emp. added). By instructing Abraham to sacrifice his promised son (cf. Hebrews 11:17), God gave Abraham another opportunity to prove his loyalty to Him, while Abraham simultaneously used this trial to continue developing a more complete, mature faith.

SEEING JEHOVAH “FACE TO FACE”

ANOTHER attack that skeptics have levied against God, Genesis, and the inspired writers, involves the theophanies of God. Throughout the book of Genesis, Moses recorded where Jehovah “appeared” to man several times. He appeared to Abraham at about the age of 75 (12:7). He appeared to him again about a quarter of a century later (17:1). Prior to His destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, God appeared to Abraham in Mamre (18:1). The Lord also appeared to Isaac and Jacob (26:2; 26:24; 35:9). In Genesis 32:30, after wrestling with God, Jacob even exclaimed, “**I have seen God face to face**” (emp. added). Such appearances of Jehovah in Genesis have caused some to question the reliability of the Bible, and in particular the book of Genesis (Wells, 2012). How could God have

appeared to man, and spoken to him “face to face,” when other biblical passages clearly teach that **God’s face cannot be seen** (Exodus 33:20-23; John 1:18; 1 John 4:12)?

Although in modern times words are regularly used in many different senses (e.g., hot and cold, good and bad), Bible critics have dismissed the possibility that the terms in the aforementioned passages were used in various ways. Throughout Scripture, however, words are often used in different ways. In James 2:5, the term “poor” refers to material wealth, whereas the term “rich” has to do with a person’s spiritual well-being (cf. Lyons, 2006). In Philippians 3:12,15, Paul used the term “perfect” (NASB) in different senses. Although Paul had attained spiritual maturity (“perfection”) in Christ (vs. 15), he had not yet attained the perfect “final thing, the victor’s prize of the heavenly calling in Christ Jesus” (Schippers, 1971, 2:62; cf. Philippians 3:9-11). Similarly, in one sense, man has seen God, but in another sense he has not.

Consider the first chapter of John where we learn that in the beginning Jesus was with God and “was God” (1:1; cf. 14,17). Though John wrote that Jesus “became flesh and dwelt among us” (1:14), he indicated only four sentences later that “no one has seen God at any time” (1:18; 1 John 4:12). Was Jesus God? Yes. Did man see Jesus? Yes. So in what sense has man not seen God? **No human has ever seen Jesus in His true image** (i.e., as a spirit Being [John 4:24] in all of His fullness, glory, and splendor). When God, the Word, appeared on Earth 2,000 years ago, He came in a veiled form. In his letter to the church at Philippi, the apostle Paul mentioned that Christ—Who had existed in heaven “in the form of God”—“made Himself of no reputation,” and took on the “likeness of men” (2:6-7). Mankind saw an embodiment of deity as Jesus dwelt on Earth in the form of a man. Men saw “the Word” that “became flesh.” Likewise, when

Jacob “struggled with God” (Genesis 32:28), He saw only a form of God, not the spiritual, invisible, omnipresent God Who fills heaven and Earth (Jeremiah 23:23-24).

But what about those statements which indicate that man saw or spoke to God “face to face”? Jacob said, “I have seen God face to face” (Genesis 32:30). Gideon proclaimed: “I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face” (Judges 6:22). Exodus 33:11 affirms that “the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.” First, although these men witnessed great and awesome things, they still only saw manifestations of God and a part of His glory (cf. Exodus 33:18-23). Second, the words “face” and “face to face” are used in different senses in Scripture. Though Exodus 33:11 reveals that God spoke to Moses “face to face,” only nine verses later God told Moses, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live” (33:20). Are we to believe that the author of Exodus was so misguided and careless that he wrote contradictory statements within only nine verses of each other? Surely not. What then does the Bible mean when it says that God “knew” (Deuteronomy 34:10), “spoke to” (Exodus 33:11), and “saw” man “face to face” (Genesis 32:30)?

A logical answer can be found in Numbers 12. Aaron and Miriam had spoken against Moses and arrogantly asked: “Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?” (Numbers 12:2). God then appeared to Aaron and Miriam, saying: “If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the Lord” (Numbers 12:6-8, emp. added). Notice the contrast: God spoke to the prophets of Israel through visions and dreams, but to Moses He spoke, “not in dark sayings,”

but “plainly.” In other words, God, Who never showed His face to Moses (Deuteronomy 33:20), nevertheless allowed Moses to see “some unmistakable evidence of His glorious presence” (Jamieson, et al., 1997), and spoke to him “face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (33:11), i.e., He spoke to Moses plainly and directly.

CONCLUSION

NEITHER the book of Genesis nor the Bible as a whole reveals “mutually incompatible characteristics of God” as modern-day skeptics have alleged. In actuality, many comments by the enemies of God reveal their devious, dishonest handling of Truth (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:2; 2 Timothy 2:15). Think about it: If skeptics can work “side by side” with a colleague without literally working inches from him (Barker, 2008, p. 335), or if he can see “eye to eye” with a fellow atheist without ever literally looking into the atheist’s eyes, then can they not understand that, for example, God could speak “face to face” with the patriarchs and prophets of old without literally revealing to them His full, glorious “face”? Indeed, it is the inconsistent allegations of the critic that should be under scrutiny. He readily accepts the understandable, non-discrepant differences in many modern-day writings, yet loudly protests against similar logical, explainable differences in Scripture.

Skeptics’ assertions in no way prove that the God of the Bible does not exist or that the Bible is unreliable. In fact, the opposite is true. The more that skeptics test the Scriptures, trying to find flaws of all kinds, the more evidence comes to light that it is actually of Divine origin (see Butt, 2007).

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever” (Isaiah 40:8).

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NOTE FROM

The Editor



New Dinosaur Poster

For over 33 years now, Apologetics Press has endeavored to provide a broad spectrum of materials designed to defend the Christian Faith. We have sought to expose the multiplicity of “wiles” (Ephesians 6:11) that Satan generates to divert people from the truth. Our multifaceted strategy has included the production of books, tracts, correspondence courses, magazines, Web articles, audio/video resources (e.g., DVDs), and even a children’s television program. We are constantly on the lookout for both scriptural and effective methods by which God’s Word may be communicated to the world. Consequently, we are venturing into a new area of media that we think will be useful in promoting the Cause.

You’ve heard it said many times that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” That saying is accurate. Evolutionists certainly recognize this principle, and they have used it effectively to promote their error for many decades. Think of the destructive effects indelibly imprinted on youthful minds in public schools across America for over 50 years now at the sight of alleged ape-like ancestors of humans. I well remember seeing a wall poster in my 7th grade science class in Phoenix, Arizona in the 60s that showed the transformation of a chimp into a human by gradual change. Well do I remember the vivid, colorful pictures of Java Man, Nebraska Man, and Piltdown Man plastered in science magazines and school textbooks. These images served to “put flesh” on evolutionary theory and create the false impression that evolution is factual.

Indeed, the damage done to millions of young minds has been catastrophic.

And what have those who believe in the Bible done in response to this pervasive propaganda? Virtually nothing. In fact, have you **ever** seen a picture of Noah’s ark that included a pair of dinosaurs? Have you ever seen a picture or poster of humans cohabiting with dinosaurs? Not likely (though we at A.P. have published a number of such pictures in our publications over the years)—certainly not in public schools! It’s past time for us to counter the forces of evil in this regard.

As a result, we are delighted to release the first A.P. poster that depicts a hypothetical scenario involving a human interacting with a dinosaur. We have taken “Deers in the Forest,” one of the beautiful art pieces of Lewis Lavoie (who illustrated the A.P. kid’s book *Dinosaurs Unleashed*) and created a poster format with a relevant verse. A full 24 x 36 inches, this outstanding work of art is suitable for framing and deserves to be displayed on the walls of children’s bedrooms, church classrooms, and even public school rooms across the nation. Please take the time to order copies for those in your circle of influence.

Dave Miller

See the Center Spread
for More Details